

S-p-r-e-a-d-i-n-g the word

Conference of Consumer Organizations (COCO) will hold a national conference on Nov. 12-14 at the Hotel Jefferson in Richmond, VA. COCO was established in 1973 and is a national "umbrella" organization of state and local consumer groups as well as government and industry consumer representatives. Conference theme is "Professional, Occupational and Institutional Licensing and the Consumer." The \$50 registration fee, which includes Sunday reception and dinner and Monday and Tuesday lunches and materials, should be sent to COCO National Conference, P.O. Box 158, Newton Center, MA 02159. A limited number of consumer scholarships are available by writing directly to COCO's chairman, Dr. Louis Meyer, at Edinboro State College, Edinboro, PA 16444; telephone 814-732-2451.

Consumer Tire Guide, a publication of the **Tire Industry Safety Council** (published in cooperation with other organizations including **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**) tells you how to maintain your tires for maximum safety and economy. It tells you how to "read" a tire's sidewall and describes the types of car tires. Free single copies are available from the Council, Suite 766, National Press Bldg., Washington, DC 20004; telephone 202-783-1022.

Tips from **Pantry Pride**'s Consumer Affairs Dept., 3175 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Philadelphia, PA 19104 are included in *Stretching Your Meat Dollars*. The pamphlet reviews the basics of meat label reading as well as the basics of cost per serving. Pantry Pride will send you a copy if you provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

The **Cooperative Extension Service** of Larimer County, CO, is sponsoring a Consumer "Catch-Up" Symposium Oct. 5-6 at the Student Center of Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO. The symposium is intended as a consumer update for staffs of county government and community agencies working directly with clients who may be in need of consumer resources and guidance. There is no registration fee, but persons interested in attending are urged to pre-register by Sept. 29. Write or call Sue Osborn, Extension Agent for Consumer Education, P.O. Box 543, Fort Collins, CO 80522; telephone 303-221-2100, ext. 281 or 303-667-7816.

consumer news

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Esther Peterson, Director



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Junk food in schools

Agriculture Dept. has decided to postpone final rules that would have banned the sale of candy, sodas, frozen desserts and chewing gum in school cafeterias until after the last lunch period of the day. Agriculture intended to put the ban into effect for the 1978-79 school year, but now it wants to consider more fully the large volume of comments it received.

The original proposal was published in April to implement parts of the National School Lunch Act and Child Nutrition Amendments of 1977 (Public Law 95-166, dated Nov. 10, 1977). P.L. 95-166 authorized Agriculture to prohibit the sale of competitive foods (the so-called "junk foods" listed above) in schools because parents, school officials, nutritionists and others were becoming increasingly concerned about the sale of these foods. It was believed that the "sale of low nutrient per calorie density foods prior to or during meal periods may contribute substantially to increased plate waste, reduced participation in the [school lunch] programs, and a general decline in the consumption of nutritious foods in schools."

Agriculture received more than 2,100 comments on the proposed ban from students, parents, teachers, school administrators, nutritionists, doctors, dentists, the food industry, concerned citizens and many others. Eighty-two percent of the comments received indicated support of the proposed ban—and many respondents were in favor of going beyond what was proposed. They wanted junk foods kept out of the schools altogether.

Concerned citizens, including parents, accounted for 964 of the comments, 846 of which were in favor of the ban. And 50 of the 123 students who commented favored the ban.

In announcing the delay, Agriculture pointed out that "some of those who oppose the rule believe it infringes on individual choice, or that the distinctions it makes regarding food categories are unfair and arbitrary. Some commenters also would like to restrict the ban to the school cafeteria, rather than apply it throughout the school building."

The postponement means that schools will continue to operate under existing regulations which permit state and local school authorities to adopt and enforce their own competitive food policies.

If you would like more information on the delayed junk food ban write or call Barbara McLaughlin, Room 4300 B, Auditor's Bldg., Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250; telephone 202-447-9069.

Federal publication

- The **Bureau of Health Education** has issued the 1977 edition of its *Bibliography on Smoking and Health*. The current volume contains abstracts of the world's scientific and technical literature on the subject of smoking and health. Single copies may be obtained free by writing to the Bureau of Health Education, Center for Disease Control, Atlanta, GA 30333; telephone 404-633-3311, ext. 3112.

Recalls

• STUFFED TOYS—Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announces the voluntary recall by Knickerbocker Toy Co. of Edison, NJ, of 500,000 stuffed toys that were found to have an excessive amount of lead in the ink that was used to letter the toys' names on the sweaters, Curious George and the Easter chick, Chick-A-Dee; and the puppies, Puppy Love and Scooby-Doo. The toys, which were imported from South Korea, were distributed nationwide to retail stores between March 1977 and April 1978. To date, no consumer complaints or injuries have been reported.

The toys have the following numbers imprinted on the toys' seams: K-20, K-21, K-22, K-23, K-25 and K-32. Style numbers 5465, 5466, 5467, 9750, 2270, 2271, 2285, 2286 and 9416 are imprinted on the toys' packaging. CPSC's tests revealed a range of 12% to 45% lead in the lettering on the toys, an amount in excess of the permitted level. **WHAT TO DO:** Return the toys to the place where you bought them for replacement. For more information write or call Customer Service Dept., Knickerbocker Toy Co., 10 Clearview Road, Edison, NJ 08817; telephone 201-225-4073. Or for verification of the toy model call CPSC's toll-free hotline 800-638-2666. In Maryland only call 800-492-2937.

• BENCH GRINDERS—Although this is not technically a recall, the Portable Appliance and Tool Group, McGraw-Edison Co., Columbia, MO, in cooperation with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), has announced a voluntary repair program for 16,000 6-inch bench grinders, which may pose a shock hazard. A protective sleeve insulating a lead wire may wear through on some of the units, bringing the wire into direct contact with the motor shaft and possibly resulting in severe shock if the tool is not properly grounded and if the user is grounded or touching a grounded metal object. Two cases have been reported where the insulation has worn through, one of which resulted in a shock. The tools were manufactured from April through July 1973, and for limited periods between February 1977 and January 1978.

The repair program applies to the following models of 6-inch grinders purchased after June 1973 and not showing any 3-digit code embossed on the nameplate: Manning Bowman model 715100, Toastmaster model 5577, Power House model 711100, J. C. Penney model 4030, Western Auto-Wizard model POE 6203A, Ward's Power Kraft model TGB-5102A, and K-Mart model 30-09T1.

Also involved are K-Mart model
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School days, carpools—and insurance

A recent release of the Insurance Information Institute in New York, a public education and information organization supported by the property and casualty insurance industry, advises parents to check their auto insurance in back-to-school carpools.

The Institute notes that millions of children returning to school this month will find themselves in carpools. But it cautions parents or anyone who plans to transport children in a privately owned car to make sure they have adequate automobile insurance, especially bodily injury liability coverage.

The Institute says: "Each state has financial responsibility laws which require motorists to show that they will be able to meet their financial liabilities in case of an accident. This is usually done with auto liability insurance. Thus, most motorists already have the minimum amount of bodily injury coverage required by their state. However, motorists who participate in car pools should consider bodily injury liability coverage with higher limits.

"Bodily injury coverage provides protection for the motorist if his or her car injures or kills pedestrians, persons riding in other cars, or guests in his or her car."

The Institute goes on to say that most motorists have insurance coverage that will pay the medical bills of persons injured while riding in the owner's car regardless of who is at fault in the accident. Medical payment coverages of \$1,000 for medical bills means that the driver and each passenger in the car can collect up to \$1,000 for medical bills, so there is no need to increase this coverage just because the owner joins a carpool and will be carrying a greater number of passengers than usual.

Carpool drivers should also be aware that their insurance coverage might be jeopardized if the carpool is operated for profit. To preserve insurance coverage, carpool "fees" should not be more than the fair share of gas, oil and general depreciation on the car. If a flat fee is charged—without taking into consideration the gas, oil and other expenses—other types of insurance might be required.

Finally, the Institute stresses the importance of all occupants of the vehicle wearing seat belts at all times.

If you would like to receive educational materials on property and liability insurance in general, write or call Doris Handy at the Insurance Information Institute, 110 William St., New York, NY 10038; telephone 212-233-7650.

To fly: \$99 plus tax

In an initial decision by a Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) administrative law judge, World Airways was given tentative approval to begin low-fare transcontinental flights—\$99 one way plus tax—early next year. The judge's decision still awaits final approval by CAB before World Airways and possibly other carriers are finally authorized to offer this extremely inexpensive service to consumers. The judge said that CAB has given the case a high priority and characterized it "as a landmark case, recognizing that the case has a crucial bearing on the Board's current pro-competitive and low-fare policies."

In 1975, CAB ruled that existing laws prohibited it from allowing World Airways (a chartered carrier) to provide the inexpensive, scheduled service described above, but late in 1976 a Federal Appeals Court reversed the decision and told CAB it had the authority to let such carriers provide regularly scheduled service and should therefore consider the merits of World Airways' proposal.

Emergency gas rationing

In testimony before the Economic Regulatory Administration of the Energy Dept. on its proposed standby plan for emergency gas rationing [See CONSUMER REGISTER July 15], Esther Peterson, Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs and Director of the US Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA), pointed out that Energy's proposal, based on vehicle registrations per household, "appeared to confer greater benefits to those with higher incomes."

Mrs. Peterson cited Census Bureau data which indicate a direct relationship between income and vehicles owned per household—67.2% of households with incomes over \$25,000 having at least 2 vehicles, and only 6.2% of households with incomes under \$3,000 having second vehicles. The proposed system, said the President's Consumer Advisor, confers ration rights according to registered vehicles and "discriminates against those who do not have the money to purchase a second or third vehicle."

Energy's plan would treat citizens "who have not . . . differently than those who have," Mrs. Peterson noted, adding that "government should not be in the business of penalizing those who need the most from their government." As an anti-fraud measure the proposed Energy plan would also permit ration rights only for vehicles registered prior to the onset of the rationing program and new cars bought while the program is in effect. Again, Mrs. Peterson testified, Census Bureau statistics show that more used cars are bought by low-income households than those with higher earnings. Yet the proposed Energy plan would allow no ration rights for used vehicles bought during a period of rationing.

To eliminate these inequities, the OCA Director suggested that, first, the plan be altered so that each household with at least one registered vehicle would be eligible for an equal amount of ration rights. For business vehicles, she noted, the Energy plan should remain unchanged.

Second, she proposed that all registered vehicles that have passed state inspection (where required) be eligible for ration rights. This would avoid fraudulent registration of inoperable cars to procure ration rights—which can be legally sold—without discriminating against low-income citizens.

Low cost prescription drug guide

A pre-publication draft of a *Guide to Prescription Drug Prices* has been completed by the Health Care Financing Administration's (HCFA) Office of Pharmaceutical Reimbursement. It was distributed last month for review and comment to consumer organizations, pharmacy and medical schools, state medical societies and pharmacy associations and national trade associations. The purpose of the *Guide* is to encourage more cost conscious prescribing and dispensing of prescription drugs by doctors and druggists. The *Guide* will enable doctors and druggists to do this by making comparisons between the cost to the pharmacist of different brands of the same drug and of different drugs usable for the same purpose.

Plans are under way to begin publishing the *Guide* twice a year beginning in January 1979. As a result of mentioning this project in CONSUMER NEWS in February, HCFA received over 500 letters expressing interest in the *Guide* and requesting copies of it.

Due to a limited supply of draft copies it has been impossible to respond to these requests. However, when the *Guide* is published the requests will be filled. In addition, CONSUMER NEWS will report on its availability.

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Recalls (Continued from page 2)

30-90T1 showing date code 77B, 77D, 77E or 77F, and Ward's Power Kraft model TGB 5102A with the 77F date code embossed on the nameplate. Tools having these date codes and containing an orange inspection sticker on the carton or the unit have already been inspected and are not involved in the repair program.

WHAT TO DO: If you have one of these bench grinders, stop using it temporarily and write to Bench Grinder Repair Program % National Service Manager, Portable Appliance and Tool Group, McGraw-Edison Co., 2nd and Vine St., Boonville, MO 65233 to get instructions for having the unit checked and repaired free. To verify brand names and model numbers call CPSC's toll-free hotline at 800-638-2666; in Maryland only call 800-492-2937.

* **ANTI-WORM DRUG—Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** has announced that Beecham Laboratories, Bristol, TN, is recalling Sansolid (an anti-worm drug generically named uredofos) because the drug has been implicated since June in the death of 246 dogs and cats. The dewormer tablets are available only from veterinarians, but some tablets may be in consumer homes or kennels because veterinarians may give a supply to pet owners to administer 2 weeks after the first dose. **WHAT TO DO:** Return tablets to veterinarian. Consumers can identify the tablets because the name should be written on the envelope in which they were dispensed. FDA does not know how many tablets may be in consumer homes, but if consumers have dewormer tablets which were dispensed by a veterinarian but were not identifiable, they should call the veterinarian. FDA is investigating the causes of the unusual number of deaths.

* **COOKED ROAST BEEF—Agriculture Dept.** has announced the voluntary recall of cooked roast beef sold by Famous Brands, Ltd., of Passaic, NJ, because the beef was associated with 3 salmonella food poisoning outbreaks.

The beef, which has been distributed only in New York and northern New Jersey, is sold to institutional buyers such as caterers, hotels and restaurants in 6-to-12-pound packages. It is identified by Establishment Number 514A and is sold under the following names: "Cooked roast beef," distributed by Famous Brands, Ltd., "Oven roasted beef," distributed by Joel Provisions, Inc., of Yonkers, NY, and "Oven roasted beef," distributed by Swift Processed Meats of Kearny, NJ. All 3 labeled products are processed and cooked by Famous Brands. **WHAT TO DO:** Return products to Famous Brands or get in touch with Agriculture food inspectors.

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Recalls (Continued from page 3)

NOTE: The beef being recalled is the "rare" pre-cooked beef roast that has once again become available to consumers after Agriculture revised its Federal meat inspection rules. In the rules Agriculture gave meat processors 15 approved combinations of cooking time-temperatures to use in preparing a salmonella-free pre-cooked beef roast. Many of the combinations result in a rare-cooked appearance.

Now that Agriculture has evidence that the roast beef distributed by Famous Brands was not properly cooked under the new procedures, it plans to assess the adequacy of its requirements. *Federal Register* July 18, page 30791 contains details of the new regulations. For more information write or call Dr. Ronald Engel, Food Safety and Quality Service, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250; telephone 202-447-2326.

* CARS—National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has announced the voluntary recall by Subaru of America, Inc., of 23,000 1978 Brat passenger vehicles because of possible fuel-tank leaks. Subaru told NHTSA that blockage in the fuel evaporative-control system can produce abnormally high pressure, causing hairline cracks in the tanks. WHAT TO DO: Examine your fuel tanks for bulges or signs of leakage and get in touch with your dealer immediately if a problem exists. Owners will be notified by the company, and the problem, if any, will be corrected at no expense to the owners.

"Conference call"

The US Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA), along with several consumer groups, will sponsor a consumer conference on the telephone (common carrier) industry Dec. 11 and 12 at the Shoreham Americana Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Presently there is frequently severe underrepresentation of consumer interests at the various levels of telephone regulation. Lack of consumer participation in telephone rate-making and other common carrier regulatory proceedings continues despite ever-increasing consumer costs for telephone services and rapid changes in regulation.

The conference objective is to educate consumers and consumer groups on the intricacies of the telephone industry and the means for participating in the telephone regulatory process. In addition, the conference will be a forum for discussion of the consumer implications of proposed legislation for 1979 which would radically change the entire regulatory framework for the telephone industry.

A session especially designed for consumer leaders will cover telephone industry basics—terminology, technology, equipment, and industry structure. In addition, sessions are planned on procedures and methods for participation in telephone rate cases, and consumer perspectives on various aspects of telephone services and regulation.

At CONSUMER NEWS presstime the program for the 2-day conference was not yet final, but will include presentations by prominent and authoritative legislative and regulatory officials involved with common carrier telecommunications. Esther Peterson, Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs and Director of OCA, is also expected to address the conference.

For more information write Telephone Conference, US Office of Consumer Affairs, 621 Reporters Bldg., Washington, DC 20201; or call 202-755-8830.

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